

IN THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims

1. (currently amended) A ~~computer implemented~~ method for determining a suggested vehicle part stocking level for a vehicle retailer, using a centralized computer located at a supplier of vehicle parts and a local computer at the vehicle retailer in communication with the centralized computer, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving from the vehicle retailer at least one of a target fill rate and a target inventory investment for input into at least the local computer;

accessing part demand information for the vehicle retailer stored at least in a part sales database in the local computer ;

accessing part cost information stored in the part sales database; and

determining at least with the local computer a suggested part stocking level for the vehicle retailer based on the part demand information and the part cost information in view of the target fill rate or the target inventory investment input to at least the local computer by the vehicle retailer.

2. (currently amended) The method of Claim 1 wherein ~~the step of~~ accessing part demand information further comprises forecasting with at least the local computer average weekly sales data for each part in part based on prior part sales data for the vehicle retailer stored at least in the part sales database.

3. (currently amended) The method of Claim 2 wherein ~~the step of~~ accessing the part demand information further comprises using a variable response smoothing technique in at least the local computer to calculate average weekly sales data.

4. (currently amended) The method of Claim 1 wherein ~~the step of~~ accessing the part ~~demand~~ demand information further comprises forecasting average weekly sales data in part based on prior part sales by other vehicle retailers stored in a centralized part sales database in the centralized computer, where the vehicle retailer is located in a geographic area proximate to the other vehicle retailers.

5. (currently amended) The method of Claim 1 wherein ~~the step of~~ determining a suggested part stocking level further comprises computing with at least the local computer an optimal inventory stocking level and an optimal re-order level for each part.

6. (currently amended) The method of Claim 1 further comprising ~~the steps of~~ defining inventory constraints for input into at least the local computer and determining with at least the local computer the suggested part stocking level in view of the inventory constraints.

7. (currently amended) The method of Claim 1 further comprising ~~the step of~~ translating with at least the local computer the suggested part stocking level to a suggested part order for the vehicle retailer in view of current part inventory held by the vehicle retailer.

8. (currently amended) A ~~computer implemented~~ method for determining a suggested vehicle part stocking level for a given vehicle retailer using a centralized computer located at a supplier of vehicle parts and a local computer at the vehicle retailer in communication with the centralized computer, the method comprising:

accessing with at least the centralized computer regional part demand information stored in a centralized part sales database of the centralized computer for a plurality of vehicle retailers residing in a geographic area, where the plurality of vehicle retailers includes the given vehicle retailer;

periodically transferring the regional part demand information from the centralized part sales database to a local part sales database at the local computer;

determining at least with the local computer a contrived part demand forecast for at least one part based on the regional part demand information;

accessing part demand information stored in the local part sales database for the given vehicle retailer; and

determining with at least the local computer a suggested vehicle part stocking level for the given vehicle retailer based in part on the contrived part demand forecast.

9. (original) The method of Claim 8 wherein the regional part demand information is further defined as prior part sales data for each of the plurality of vehicle retailers.

10. (currently amended) The method of Claim 8 further ~~comprises~~ comprising determining the contrived part demand forecast for a given part when the regional part demand for the given part exceeds a predetermined regional demand threshold value.

11. (original) The method of Claim 10 wherein the regional demand threshold value varies based on the size of the given vehicle retailer.

12. (currently amended) The method of Claim 8 wherein ~~the step of~~ determining a suggested part stocking level further comprises using the contrived part demand forecast for a given part when the contrived part demand forecast for the given part exceeds the part demand information for the given part.

13. (currently amended) The method of Claim 8 wherein ~~the step of~~ determining a suggested part stocking level further comprises computing with at least the local computer an optimal inventory stocking level and an optimal re-order level for each part.